

D&D Fight Club

The Marilith Dervish

By Robert Wiese



Welcome to the new Fight Club! At last, the column that provides complex opponents -- or occasionally allies -- at various Challenge Ratings is back. All you have to do is choose the right CR and drop it into your game. So if you're looking for a foe that's just a little different, this column is for you!

This month's installment details Aishapra, the marilith dervish. The concept was introduced in the [D&D Creature Competition](#), but the dervish is not as great a class choice for a marilith as it seems at first glance, so I mixed in some other classes to optimize her character.

Aishapra may be more challenging than her CR indicates in her highest-level version, but player characters have a lot of tricks as well. Anyone who actually uses the 24th-level version is welcome to email me at robwiese8@yahoo.com and tell me how the encounter went.

Aishapra, the Marilith Dervish

In the infinite layers of the Abyss, mariliths serve as generals and strategists for the balors, who make the overall war plans for the demon armies. When preparing for combat, a marilith typically takes some time to size up her opponent and decide whether to engage it alone or with a small army of demons. The best strategists survive to become trusted (at least as much as a demon can be) generals under specific balors -- and some even serve abyssal deities or demon princes directly.

Such was the case with Aishapra, a star among mariliths. Because she loves physical combat as much as she does directing armies, she has trained in abilities that enhance her natural whirl-of-steely-death combat style.



Some time ago, Aishapra was called via a gate spell to Faerûn (or your campaign world) by a Red Wizard of Thay with whom she was forced to make a deal. Unable to return home after she had fulfilled her end of the bargain, she slew the wizard and scattered very tiny pieces of him all across Faerûn. For a while afterward, Aishapra sought to return home to the Abyss, but at some point she realized the great potential of operating independently in this world. Now eager to concoct and execute her own evil plans, she is ready to confound your heroes.

Combat

Aishapra has lived for a long time and would like to continue to do so. Thus, she prefers to hide and use her teleport ability to get the drop on opponents in personal combat. She much prefers situations in which she can make full attacks against a single foe, and she knows the value of eliminating one opponent before moving on to another. She knows that wizards and clerics are the most dangerous to her, so she seeks to eliminate them first. If she feels that she is in danger, she does not hesitate to teleport away, or to use her shadowdancer abilities (if she has them) to escape. She always carries healing wands that she can use with her Use Magic Device skill.

Aishapra (17th Level)

In this version, Aishapra has only recently begun to incorporate the abilities provided by her dervish class into her personal tactics. She tumbles at full speed when using her dervish dance ability, thereby gaining lots of extra attacks, plus a lower-than-normal chance of provoking attacks of opportunity.

Aishapra CR 18

Female marilith dervish 1

CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +30, Spot +30

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 37, touch 15, flat-footed 33; Dodge

hp 268 (17 HD); DR 10/cold iron and good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; SR 25

Fort +21, **Ref** +18, **Will** +17

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +1 *keen longsword* +31 (2d6+14/17-20) or

Melee slam +29 (1d8+13) or

Melee tail slap +29 (4d6+13) or

Melee +1 *keen longsword* +31/+26/+21/+16 (2d6+14/17-20) and 5 +1 *keen longswords* +31 (2d6+7/17-20) and tail slap +27 (4d6+6) or

Melee 6 slams +29 (1d8+13) and tail slap +27 (4d6+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +17; **Grp** +34

Atk Options constrict 4d6+19, dervish dance 1/day, improved grab, *summon demon*; **Combat Expertise**

Combat Gear 5 wands of *cure light wounds* (50 charges each)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th):

At will -- *align weapon*, *blade barrier* (DC 23), *magic weapon*, *project image* (DC 23), *polymorph*, *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 22), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy aura* (DC 25).

Abilities Str 37, Dex 23, Con 32, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 24

SQ movement mastery, slashing blades, true seeing

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Multiattack, Multiweapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Balance +7, Bluff +26, Concentration +28, Diplomacy +26, Disguise +7 (+9 acting), Hide +20, Intimidate +28, Jump +18, Listen +30, Move Silently +24, Perform (dance) +15, Search +23, Sense Motive +24, Spellcraft

+21 (+23 scrolls), Spot +30, Survival +5 (+7 following tracks), Tumble +11, Use Magic Device +26 (+28 scrolls)

Possessions +2 chain shirt, 6 +1 keen longswords, tail ring of speed (as boots of speed), ring of protection +2, belt of giant strength +4

Hook "I'm three times the fighter you could ever be."

Constrict (Ex): Aishapra deals 4d6+19 points of damage with a successful grapple check. The constricted creature must succeed on a DC 31 Fortitude save or lose consciousness for as long as it remains in her coils and for 2d4 rounds thereafter. The save DC is Strength-based.

Dervish Dance (Ex): Aishapra can become a whirling dancer of death once per day. While doing so, she can make full attack action (melee attacks only) and still move up to her speed. However, she must move a minimum of 5 feet between each attack and the next when using this ability, and she cannot return to a square she has just exited, though she may return to that square later during her full attack. Aishapra is subject to attacks of opportunity while dancing but may tumble normally as part of her move. If prevented from completing her move, Aishapra is also prevented from finishing her full attack. If she wields a slashing weapon while in a dervish dance, she gains a +1 bonus on her attack and damage rolls. She can perform a dervish dance only once per encounter, and her dance lasts 4 rounds. At the end of the dance, she is fatigued for the duration of the encounter. While dancing, Aishapra cannot use any skills or abilities that involve concentration or require her to remain still, such as Move Silently, Hide, or Search. She can use the Combat Expertise feat while dancing.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Aishapra must hit with her tail slap attack. She can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If she succeeds on the grapple check, she can constrict.

Movement Mastery: Aishapra may take 10 on Jump, Perform (dance), or Tumble checks even when stress and distraction would normally prevent her from doing so.

Slashing Blades: Aishapra treats scimitars as light weapons for all purposes.

Summon Demon (Sp): Once per day, Aishapra can attempt to summon 4d10 dretches, 1d4 hezrou, or one nalfeshnee with a 50% chance of success, or one glabrezu or another marilith with a 20% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

True Seeing (Su): This ability is continuously active, as the spell (caster level 16th).

Feats: In combination with her natural abilities, Aishapra's Multiweapon Fighting feat allows her to attack with all her arms at no penalty.

Aishapra (21st Level)

In this version, Aishapra still makes effective use of her Tumble skill in conjunction with her dervish dance ability, particularly now that she can automatically tumble through a single foe's space and past other opponents. She prefers situations that allow her to use movement to her advantage and still take full attacks, but she knows that full attacks are better than single attacks even when she cannot use her dervish dance ability.

Aishapra CR 22

Female marilith dervish 2/scout 1/shadowdancer 2

CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +30, Spot +30

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 44, touch 19, flat-footed 38; uncanny dodge; Dodge

hp 331 (21 HD); DR 10/cold iron and good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; SR 27

Fort +21, **Ref** +27, **Will** +18

Speed 45 ft. (9 squares)

Melee +2 *keen longsword* +35 (2d6+14/17-20) or

Melee slam +32 (1d8+14) or

Melee tail slap +32 (4d6+14) or

Melee +2 *keen longsword* +35/+30/+25/+20 (2d6+16/17-20) and 5 +2 *keen longswords* +35/+30 (2d6+9/17-20) and tail slap +30 (4d6+7) or

Melee 6 slams +32 (1d8+14) and tail slap +30 (4d6+7)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +19; **Grp** +37

Atk Options constrict 4d6+21, dervish dance 1/day, improved grab, skirmish +1d6, *summon demon*; Combat Expertise

Special Actions hide in plain sight

Combat Gear *wand of cure critical wounds* (50 charges), *wand of darkness* (50 charges)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th):

At will -- *align weapon*, *blade barrier* (DC 23), *magic weapon*, *project image* (DC 23), *polymorph*, see *invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 22), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy aura* (DC 25).

Abilities Str 39, Dex 30, Con 32, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 24

SQ evasion, movement mastery, slashing blades, trapfinding, true seeing

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Multiweapon Fighting, Mobility, Multiattack, Multiweapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Balance +12, Bluff +30, Concentration +28, Diplomacy +26, Hide +35, Intimidate +28, Jump +23, Listen +30, Move Silently +34, Perform (dance) +21, Search +25, Sense Motive +26, Spellcraft +21, Spot +30, Tumble +27, Use Magic Device +26

Possessions +5 *mithral chain shirt*, 6 +2 *keen longswords*, *tail ring of speed* (as *boots of speed*), *ring of protection* +4, *belt of giant strength* +6, *gloves of Dexterity* +6, *cloak of elvenkind*

Hook "Now you see me, now you don't."

Constrict (Ex): Aishapra deals 4d6+21 points of damage with a successful grapple check. The constricted creature must succeed on a DC 32 Fortitude save or lose consciousness for as long as it remains in her coils and for 2d4 rounds thereafter. The save DC is Strength-based.

Dervish Dance (Ex): Aishapra can become a whirling dancer of death once per day. While doing so, she can make full attack action (melee attacks only) and still move up to her speed. However, she must move a minimum

of 5 feet between each attack and the next when using this ability, and she cannot return to a square she has just exited, though she may return to that square later during her full attack. Aishapra is subject to attacks of opportunity while dancing but may tumble normally as part of her move. If prevented from completing her move, Aishapra is also prevented from finishing her full attack. If she wields a slashing weapon while in a dervish dance, she gains a +1 bonus on her attack and damage rolls. She can perform a dervish dance only once per encounter, and her dance lasts 7 rounds. At the end of the dance, she is fatigued for the duration of the encounter. While dancing, Aishapra cannot use any skills or abilities that involve concentration or require her to remain still, such as Move Silently, Hide, or Search. She can use the Combat Expertise feat while dancing.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows her to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Aishapra takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): Aishapra can use the Hide skill even while being observed, as long as she is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Aishapra must hit with her tail slap attack. She can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If she succeeds on the grapple check, she can constrict.

Movement Mastery: Aishapra may take 10 on Jump, Perform (dance), or Tumble checks even when stress and distraction would normally prevent her from doing so.

Skirmish (Ex): Aishapra deals +1d6 damage on all attacks in any round in which she moves at least 10 feet. This damage does not apply to creatures without discernable anatomies, incorporeal creatures, or creatures that are immune to extra damage from critical hits. She also gains a +1 competence bonus to AC in rounds when she moves at least 10 feet, and the bonus applies as soon as she has moved 10 feet.

Slashing Blades: Aishapra treats scimitars as light weapons for all purposes.

Summon Demon (Sp): Once per day, Aishapra can attempt to summon 4d10 dretches, 1d4 hezrou, or one nalfeshnee with a 50% chance of success, or one glabrezu or another marilith with a 20% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

True Seeing (Su): This ability is continuously active, as the spell (caster level 16th).

Feats: In combination with her natural abilities, Aishapra's Multiweapon Fighting feat allows her to attack with all her arms at no penalty.

Aishapra (24th Level)

In this version, Aishapra has become a master of using movement to advantage in combat. Now that she has acquired the Dire Charge epic feat, her favorite tactic is to hide in plain sight in order to get the drop on a group of foes, then charge the most dangerous-looking one and take her full attack. On average, without including the bonus for charging, she hits AC 40 about 80% of the time and deals an average of 357.5 points of damage if she hits with all fifteen attacks and moves at least 10 feet during the round. While this option sounds very deadly (and

it is), any wizards and clerics likely to fight her are probably at least 20th level, so they can penetrate her spell resistance at least 60% of the time.

Aishapra CR 25

Female marilith dervish 2/scout 4/shadowdancer 2

CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Init +15; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Listen** +34, **Spot** +34

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Infernal; **telepathy** 100 ft.

AC 45, touch 20, flat-footed 45; improved uncanny dodge; **Dodge**

hp 378 (24 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron and good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 29

Fort +24, **Ref** +29, **Will** +20

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee +4 keen longsword +39 (2d6+19/17-20) or

Melee slam +34 (1d8+15) or

Melee tail slap +34 (4d6+15) or

Melee +4 keen longsword +39/+34/+29/+24 (2d6+19/17-20) and 5 +4 keen longswords +39/+34 (2d6+11/17-20) and tail slap +32 (4d6+7) or

Melee 6 slams +34 (1d8+15) and tail slap +32 (4d6+7)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +20; **Grp** +39

Atk Options constrict 4d6+22, dervish dance, improved grab, skirmish +2d6, *summon demon*; **Combat Expertise**

Special Actions hide in plain sight, true seeing

Combat Gear *wand of cure serious wounds* (50 charges), *wand of cure light wounds* (50 charges), *wand of darkness* (50 charges)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th):

At will -- *align weapon*, *blade barrier* (DC 23), *magic weapon*, *project image* (DC 23), *polymorph*, *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 22), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy aura* (DC 25).

Abilities Str 40, Dex 30, Con 32, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 24

SQ evasion, movement mastery, slashing blades, trackless step, trapfinding

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dire Charge, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Multiweapon Fighting, Mobility, Multiattack, Multiweapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Balance +20, Bluff +30, Concentration +28, Diplomacy +26, Hide +38, Intimidate +28, Jump +27, Listen +34, Move Silently +37, Perform +21, Search +27, Sense Motive +28, Speak Language (Gnome, Infernal), Spellcraft +21, Spot +34, Tumble +34, Use Magic Device +26

Possessions +5 heavy fortification mithral chain shirt, 2 +4 keen adamantine longswords, 2 +4 keen cold iron longswords, 2 +4 keen alchemical silver longswords, tail ring of speed (as boots of speed), ring of protection +5, belt of giant strength +6, gloves of Dexterity +6, wings of flying, brooch of shielding

Hook "I can cut you to pieces in the blink of an eye."

Constrict (Ex): Aishapra deals 4d6+22 points of damage with a successful grapple check. The constricted creature must succeed on a DC 37 Fortitude save or lose consciousness for as long as it remains in her coils

and for 2d4 rounds thereafter. The save DC is Strength-based.

Dervish Dance (Ex): Aishapra can become a whirling dancer of death a certain number of times per day. While doing so, she can make full attack action (for melee attacks only) and still move up to her speed. However, she must move a minimum of 5 feet between each attack when using this ability, and she cannot return to a square she has just exited, though she may return to that square later during her full attack. The dervish is subject to attacks of opportunity while dancing but may tumble normally as part of her move. If prevented from completing her move, Aishapra is also prevented from finishing her full attack. If she wields a slashing weapon while in a dervish dance, she gains a +1 bonus on her attack and damage rolls. She can perform a dervish dance only once per encounter, and her dance lasts 7 rounds. At the end of the dance, she is fatigued for the duration of the encounter. While dancing, Aishapra cannot use any skills or abilities that involve concentration or require her to remain still, such as Move Silently, Hide, or Search. She can use the Combat Expertise feat while dancing.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows her to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Aishapra takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Fast Movement: Aishapra gains a +5 ft. enhancement bonus to speed from her dervish class, but a +10 ft. enhancement bonus to speed from her scout class (included above).

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): Aishapra can use the Hide skill even while being observed, as long as she is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Aishapra must hit with her tail slap attack. She can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If she succeeds on the grapple check, she can constrict.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Aishapra retains her Dexterity bonus to AC regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. (She still loses any Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.) She can be flanked only by a rogue of 10th level or higher.

Movement Mastery: Aishapra may take 10 on Jump, Perform (dance), or Tumble checks even when stress and distraction would normally prevent her from doing so.

Slashing Blades: Aishapra treats scimitars as light weapons for all purposes.

Skirmish (Ex): Aishapra deals +2d6 damage on all attacks in any round in which she moves at least 10 feet. This damage does not apply to creatures without discernable anatomies, incorporeal creatures, or creatures that are immune to extra damage from critical hits. She also gains a +1 competence bonus to AC in rounds when she moves at least 10 feet, and the bonus applies as soon as she has moved 10 feet.

Summon Demon (Sp): Once per day, Aishapra can attempt to summon 4d10 dretches, 1d4 hezrou, or one nalfeshnee with a 50% chance of success, or one glabrezu or another marilith with a 20% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

True Seeing (Su): Aishapra continuously uses this ability, as the spell (caster level 16th).

Feats: In combination with her natural abilities, Aishapra's Multiweapon Fighting feat allows her to attack with all

her arms at no penalty.

Additional Feats

The following feats are from books other than the *Player's Handbook* and the *Monster Manual*.

Dire Charge (Epic): If Aishapra charges a foe during the first round of combat (or the surprise round, if the character is allowed to act in it), she can make a full attack against the opponent charged.

Improved Multiweapon Fighting (from *Savage Species*): In addition to the single extra attack Aishapra gets each round with each off-hand weapon from Multiweapon Fighting, she gets a second extra attack with each such weapon, albeit at a -5 penalty.

About the Author

Robert Wiese entered the gaming hobby through the Boy Scouts, and progressed from green recruit to head of the most powerful gaming fan organization in the world. He served as head of the RPGA Network for almost seven years, overseeing the creation of the Living Greyhawk and Living Force campaigns among other achievements. Eventually he returned to private life in Reno, Nevada. He is still involved in writing, organizing conventions, and playing. He also models proteins for the Biochemistry Department of the University of Nevada, Reno, and spends as much time as possible with his wife and many pets. He expects to enlarge his family by one before the end of the year.

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